IN BUSINESS SINCE

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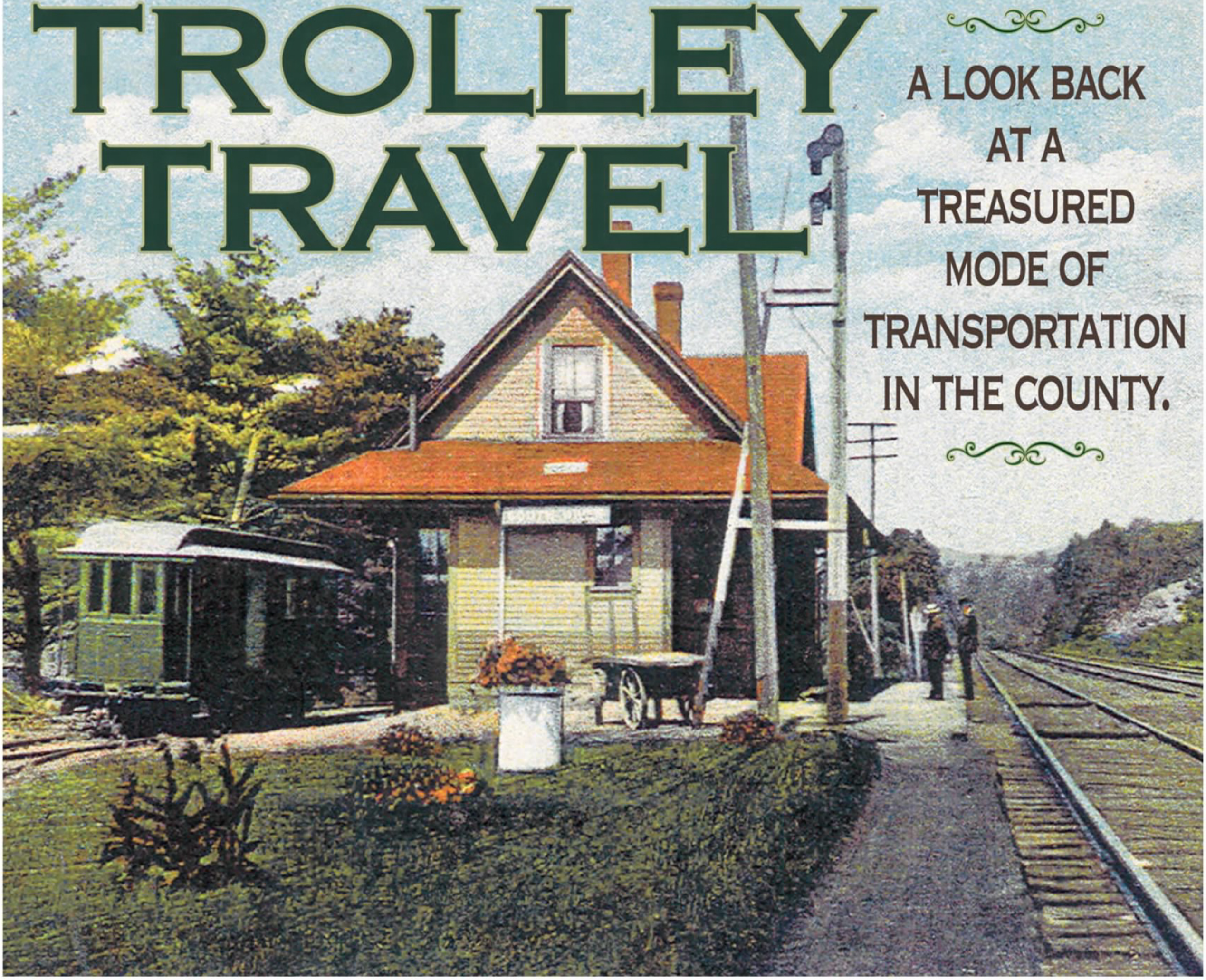
JANUARY 25, 2012

TROLLEY TRAVEL

A LOOK BACK AT A TREASURED MODE OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE COUNTY.



The Trolley

The Colrain City Railroad was a marvel near and far.
Everybody, young or old, rode the trolley car.
Jangling through the villages, off to catch a train.
Nowhere in the country will we travel so again.

Errands were commissioned, infants tagged to ride.
When the windows frosted, a stove was set inside.
In the sunny summertime open cars pertained.
Even in a thunderstorm nobody complained.

Folks with picnic baskets gaily climbed aboard.
Carfare was a nickle, which pleasure could afford;
Nothing for the young ones, half for those half-grown;
Fastest ride and breeziest a child had ever known.

Various the commerce that shuttled up and down.
Yeast-cakes were delivered, freight-cars hauled to town,
Messages entrusted. Nobody can know
What joy was lost to Colrain when the trolley had to go.

— from "A History of Colrain, Mass."
by Louise McClellan Patrie (1974)

Post Office and Red Men's Hall, Lyonsville, Mass.

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

The Colrain trolley celebrated in the poem above.

About "In Business Since" ...

This supplement celebrates Franklin County businesses, from the oldest to the newest.

ON THE COVER: South River Station, West Deerfield. The trolley seen to the left of the station went across the Deerfield River to Conway. The station also had a freight operation. Seen in the foreground is the main line of the Boston and Maine Railroad. The only way you could get to this station without walking to it was by train. Cover image from a postcard, used by permission of Peter S. Miller.

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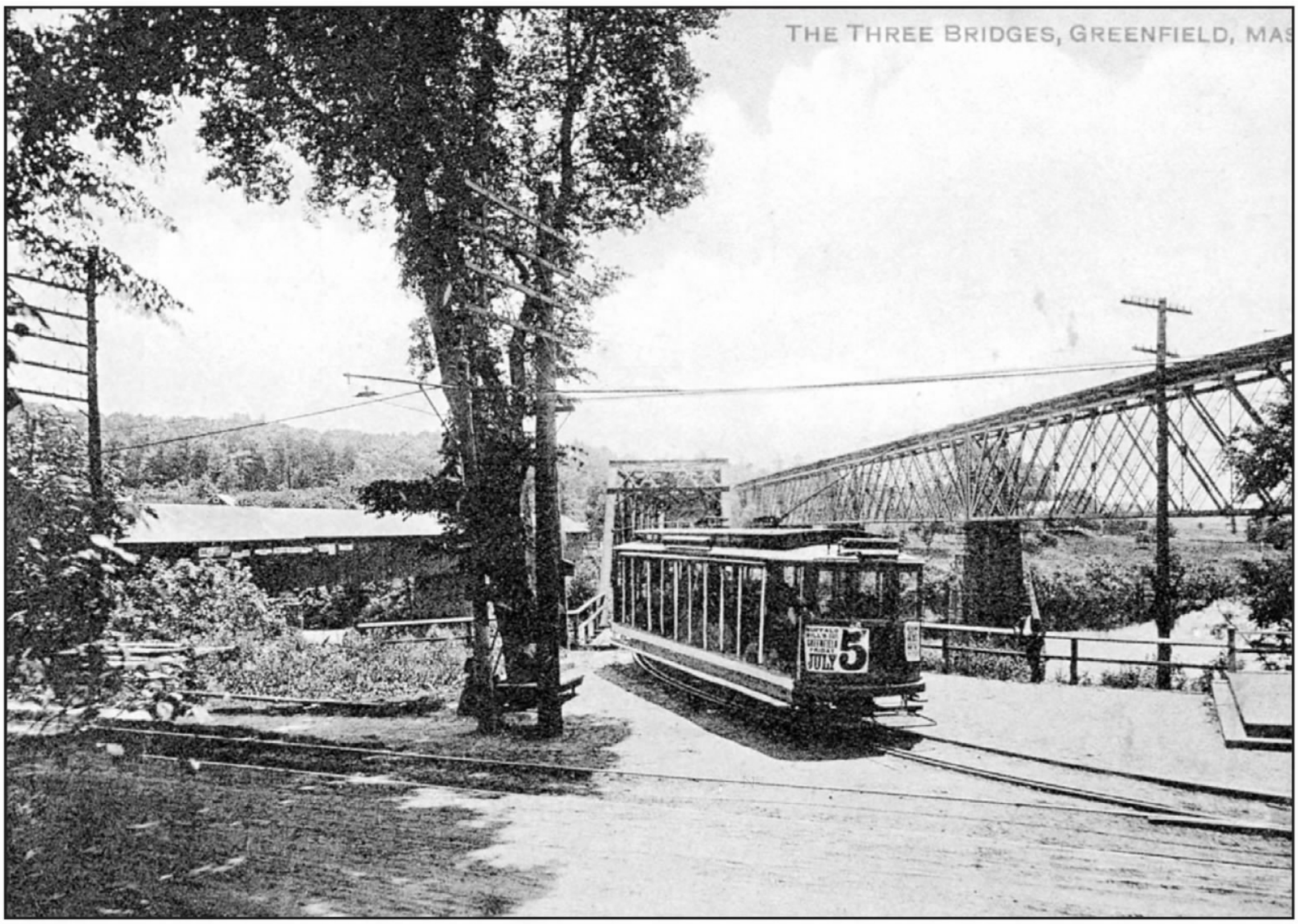

Left: A trolley crosses the Deerfield River at Cheapside. The postcard is identified on the front as "The Three Bridges, Greenfield, Mass" showing, from left, the covered bridge, the trolley bridge and the single-span railroad bridge. The track in front went to Montague. The track the trolley is on went to Northampton.

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

Trolley love

By BOB SAULNIER

I discovered trolleys about age 4, when I first rode on one with my parents. I was fascinated from the start, and young enough to ask the driver why he had no steering wheel. He patiently explained that the tracks did the steering, that he controlled only the speed, stops and

Continued on Page 4

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■ Trolley love: Trolley operators were kind to a small boy

From Page 3

starts, showing me that speed was controlled with a crank-like device which he moved back and forth in an arc (my first exposure to a rheostat). I always tried to sit up front so that I could watch him do his job.

The electric power was supplied by an overhead line, contacted by a "pole" extending from the roof of the trolley. A small wheel on the upper end of the pole ran along the power line, picking up the electricity to power the motor. Occasionally, the pole would slip off the line, losing power contact, and making it necessary for the motorman to get out and reattach it — easily done.

When the trolley reached the end of the line in Greenfield or Montague (Turners Falls), it did not turn around to return — no u-turns. Instead, the motorman got out, lowered the contact pole, securing it to a hook on the roof, and raised its duplicate at the opposite end of the car. He also reversed the hinged seat backs on the trolley so that his passengers faced forward on the return trip. Then he moved to the opposite end of the car, where he had a duplicate set of controls.

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

Greenfield Montague Transportation Area trolley at Silver Street.

I still recall the names of some of the men who drove those electric beauties: Bill Griesbach, Walter McCarthy, George Kiefer, Harry Day — all nice guys who never seemed to be annoyed by my questions.

> **"I still recall the names of some of the men who drove those electric beauties: Bill Griesbach, Walter McCarthy, George Kiefer, Harry Day..."**
>
> **Bob Saulnier**
> Danbury, Conn.

The track ran in front of our home in Bingville (East Greenfield), and, like most kids who lived near a rail track, we used to place pennies on the track to have the trolley flatten them (we were easily amused), and while waiting for our ride, an ear on the rail told us whether one was approaching, heard from a surprisingly long distance.

Speaking of sound: Where I lived, the trolleys made the loudest sound of their journey. At a point about 150 yards from their Connecticut River bridge, the track crossed the road abruptly. This entailed a sharp left turn, followed immediately by a right turn. The two turns pressed the wheel flanges, and the weight of the trolley, against the sides of the rails, creating two very loud squeals which would arouse even Dagwood from a nap. Everyone knew the source of those screeches.

I loved those trolleys. My parents knew it and surprised me one day with a toy trolley, complete with operating headline. I was thrilled and spent many hours running it between my own little Greenfield and Turners Falls.

Time marched on and the trolleys were replaced by buses, disappointing a young fan in Bingville. As a first-grader at Abercrombie, walking home from school, I watched as they were taken away, one by one, in an interesting procedure:

Across the road from Dan McGahan's grocery store, there was an old spur railroad track, part of the line that once went across the wooden covered bridge to Turners Falls. There, the villains had installed a turnout (switch), connecting the trolley track to the railroad track, the tracks having a common gauge, and brought my trolleys, one at a time, over a period of days, switching them onto the railroad track and up a ramp made of rail ties, onto a flat car, probably using some sort of winch to pull them up. I watched from the roadside each day as my favorite mode of transportation disappeared.

Greenfield native Bob Saulnier writes from his home in Danbury, Conn.

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Historian and trolley fan

Historian Peter S. Miller stands in front of the bus depot on Deeerfield Street in Greenfield that was the second home of the trolley cars that used to traverse Greenfield and beyond. A native of Greenfield, Miller was a sales representative for John Hancock Financial Services until his retirement. He has worked at Historic Deerfield as a guide. He has a B.A. in history from the University of Massachusetts. He is a past president of the Historical Society of Greenfield and worked to acquire many important items for its collection. In the last few years, he has been collecting material on Franklin County railroads and trolleys. His mother's family worked on the railroads. He is presently the official Greenfield Historian and Vice Chairman of Greenfield Historical Commission. Most of the rare photographs used in this supplement come from Miller's collection and are used with his permission.

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

A Greenfield-Montague trolley goes up Bank Row in Greenfield. In the background is the town common.

Greenfield-Montague trolley

A brief history

By PETER S. MILLER

The Greenfield and Turners Falls Street Railway Company was founded in January of 1895 and by June of 1895 it was in operation between the two towns. The construction company and the moving spirit behind the trolley line was H.L. Pierce Construction Company of Leominster.

It started out with six cars — three open cars and three closed cars. They had to construct a bridge between Montague City and East Greenfield. It was located just south of the covered bridge. That bridge opened up in July 1895. But for about a month, passengers had to disembark from the trolley and walk across the covered bridge to get to the other side. The trolley in Greenfield originally ended at Union House, roughly just south of the plumbing supply place on the corner of Mill and Deerfield streets.

The railroad in Turners Falls went up Montague city street, up Avenue A, over 7th Street, and up L Street, across the Montague Plains to Millers Falls. The car barn was located in Montague City just north of the former Farren hospital and it's still there. The office was the little building just north of the Farren.

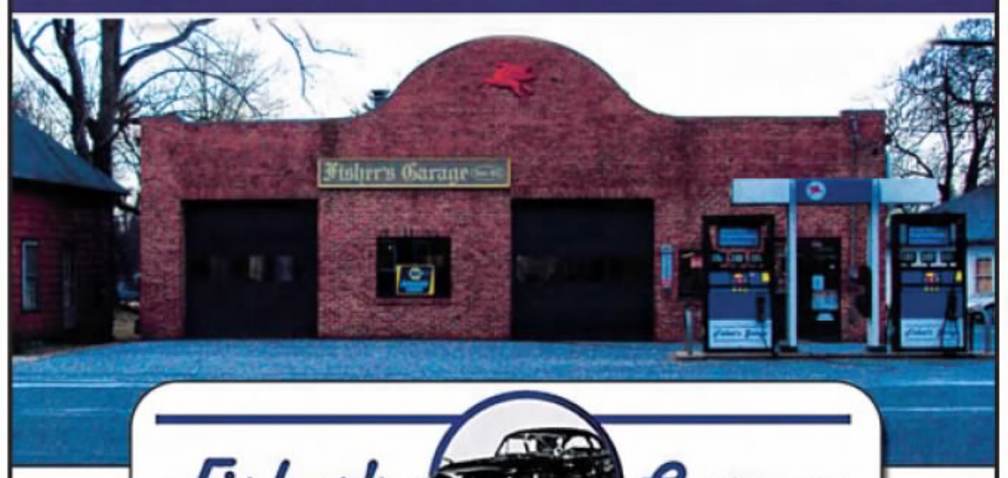
In 1899, they built a trolley from Lake Pleasant to Montague Center and then in May of 1901 it was sold to the main company.

When the trolley came to Greenfield, it eventually went up Bank Row and continued up Federal Street. In 1903, they extended the line down Silver Street to Chapman Street. They couldn't go any further because of the railroad tracks. And they went down Main Street to Conway Street and up Conway Street to the top of the hill at Nashs Mill.

In 1903-4, service to

Continued on Page 7

In Business Since 1912



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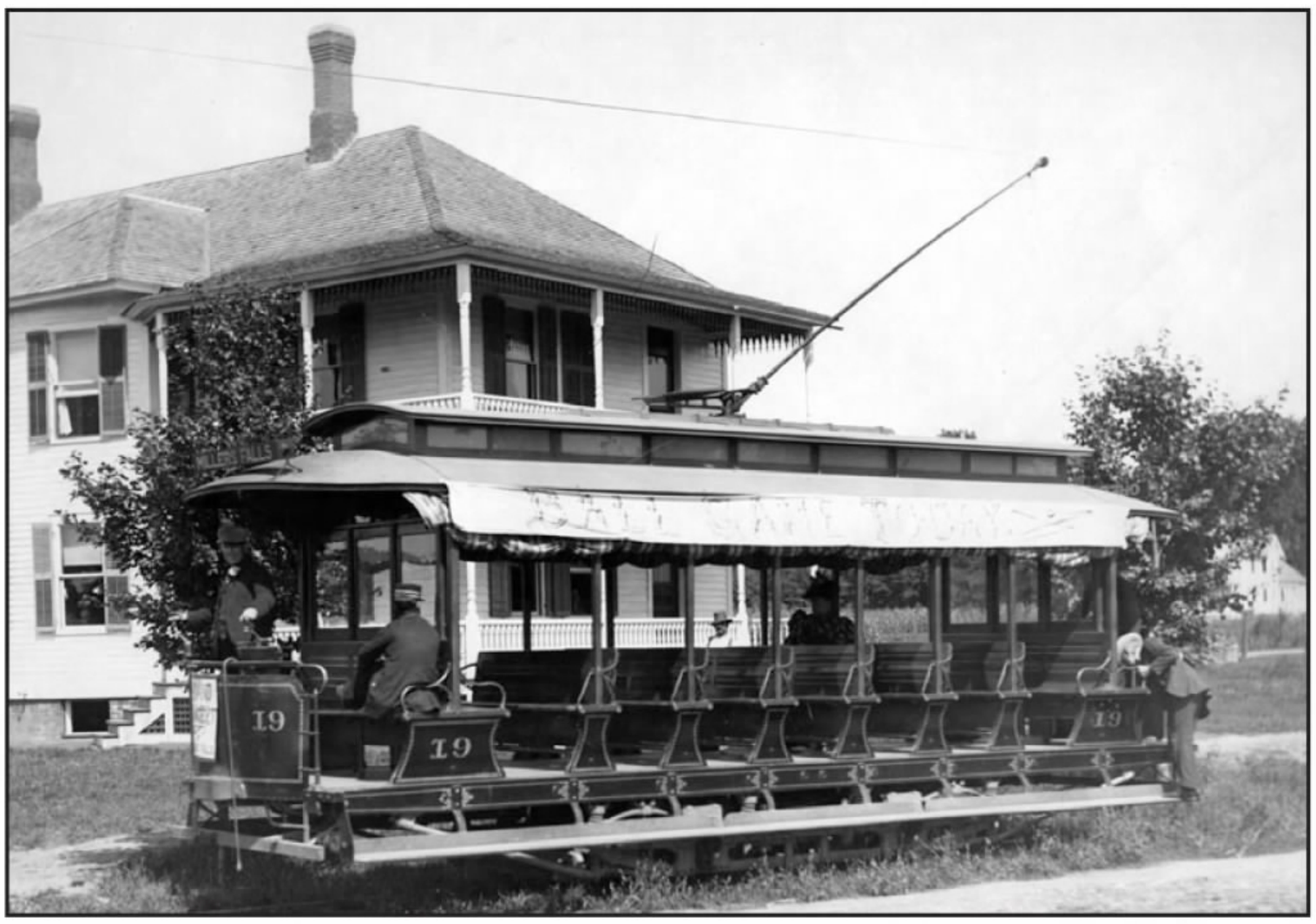
Photos from the collection of Peter S. Miller

Above: Trolley tracks can be seen going up the center of Greenfield's Main Street, looking east, circa 1915. Below: Trolley car No. 19 at Conway Street in Greenfield, circa 1915.



Greenfield Montague trolley

From Page 5

South Deerfield. It went through Old Deerfield and then in 1905 they formed the Greenfield Deerfield Northampton line.

In 1905, they formed the Connecticut Valley Street Railway Company to include Greenfield, Turners Falls, Deerfield, Northampton and Amherst for a total of 48 miles. At that time, they built the car barns at Cheapside, which later became the Greenfield Montague Transportation Authority.

Then it went into receivership in 1923 and it died in 1924. Then the town of Greenfield and Montague purchased the rolling stock and the bridge at Gill Montague and formed a municipal transportation authority that still exists today.

They used to have Sunday excursions that went to Lake Pleasant.

They had buses, too, that ran along with the trolleys and that got started in 1919 when the two towns purchased 8.7 miles of track, car barn, sand house, Montague City trolley bridge, six double track cars and six workcars.

The last trolley run was on July 7, 1934. The flood of 1936 took out that covered trolley bridge.

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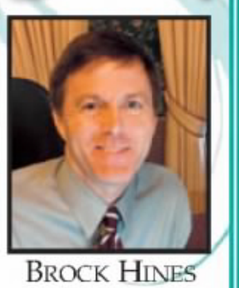
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Left: Four trolley cars can be seen at the intersection of Main and Federal streets in Greenfield circa 1915. Note the uniformed trolley conductors standing in front of each car. In the background is Greenfield's Mansion House. Below: A trolley car from the Greenfield-Deerfield-Northampton Street Railway Co. In the background is the railroad bridge.

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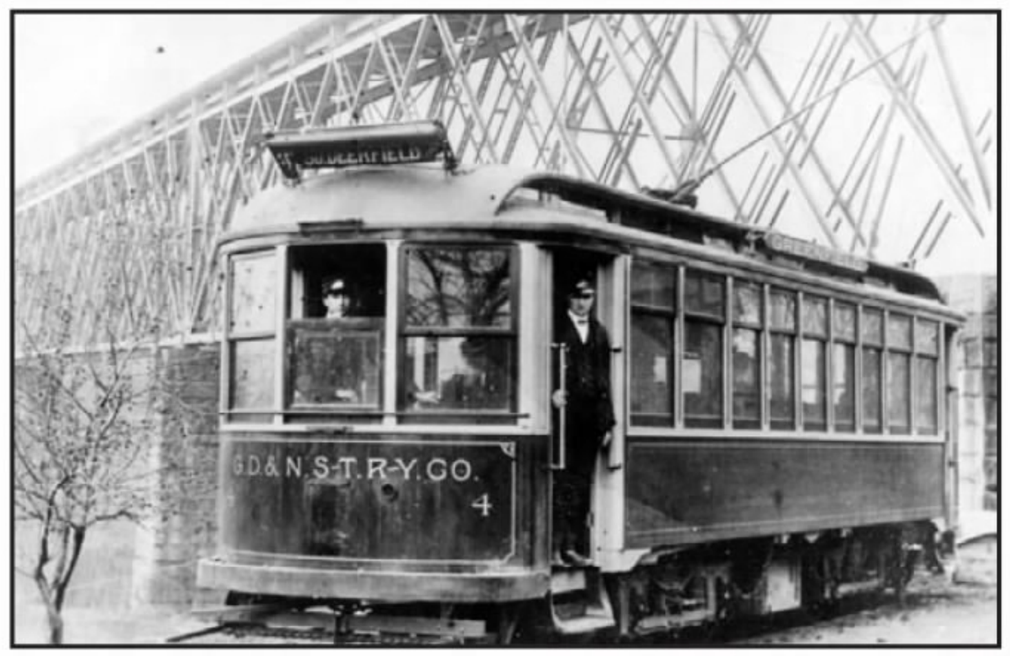

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Above: The trolley runs up Avenue A in Turners Falls circa 1898. Note the sign for Stowell's Dining Room in the lower right corner. From Avenue A, the trolley went over 7th Street and up L Street and across the Montague Plains to Millers Falls. The car barn was located in Montague City, just north of the former Farren hospital. It's still there, as is the office, which was in the little building just north of the Farren. Below: Greenfield and Turners Falls Street Railroad, at Deerfield Street circa 1898, celebrates its inaugural run.

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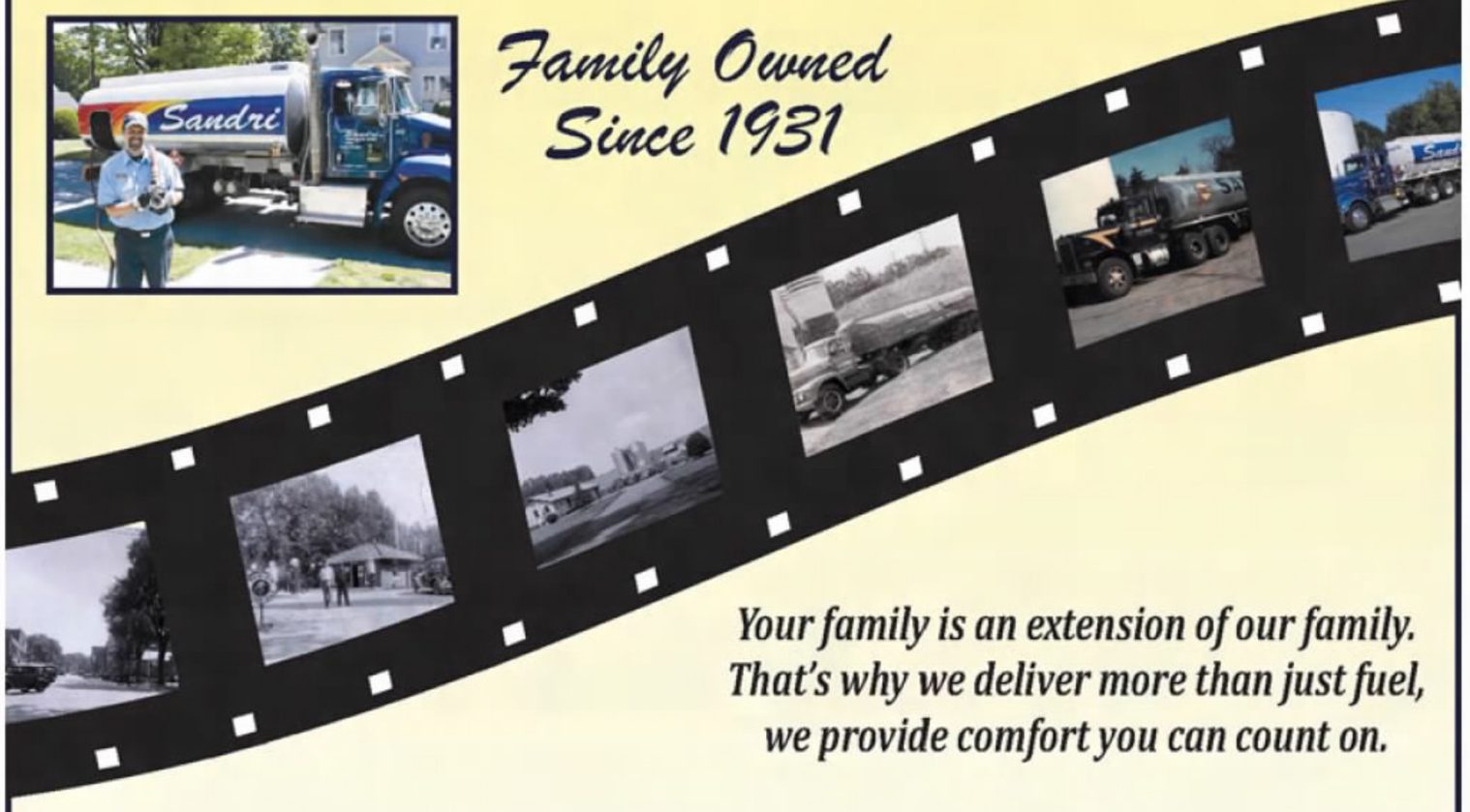

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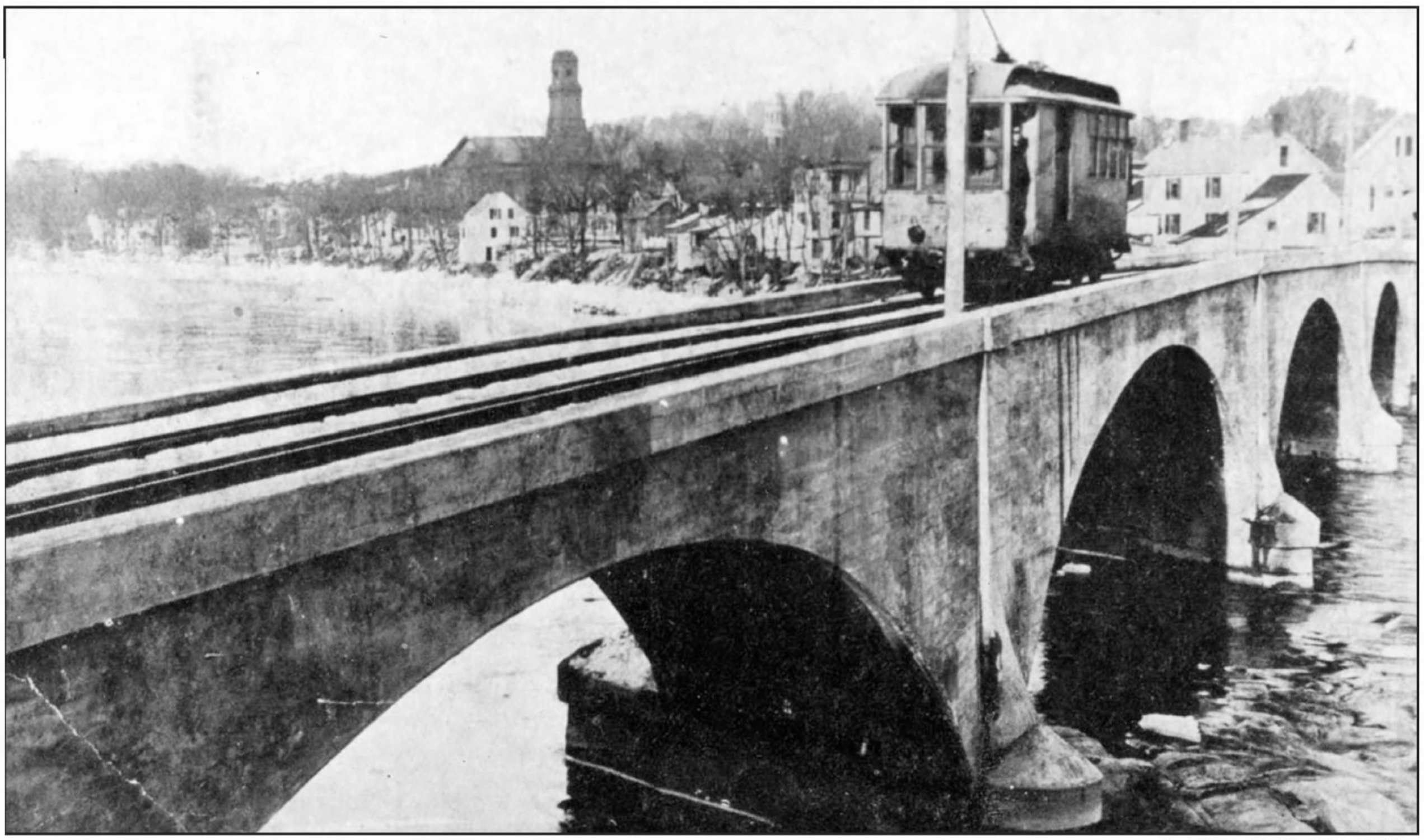

Photo from collection of Peter S. Miller

The trolley goes across the bridge between Shelburne Falls and Buckland circa 1905. The water main also goes through this bridge.

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The trolley that survived

By ERICA COUTU
Special to The Recorder

SHELBURNE FALLS — The Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway Company was no different than any other small-town trolley line in its day. Serving as a vital source of transportation for people and their industrial and agricultural businesses, this railway has managed to become a historic landmark long after the trolley cars stopped running.

The former bridge, that once served as an electric railway roadbed and has since been transformed into a beautiful pathway of flowers that draws tourists from all over the world, has made Shelburne Falls a famous summer destination.

Aside from the rugged bridge that has withstood raging flood waters in both 1938 and 2011, the trolley itself speaks of a bygone era when things seemed just a bit slower and more laid back than today's faster paced, technology-driven world.

The bridge that almost never was

Construction of The Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway Company's concrete bridge over the Deerfield River faced much opposition by members of the Buckland selectmen, who,

Continued on Page 14

Since the business began back in 1934 with Gerald Barrett and John Baker the business has evolved with the times but still operate under the same premise of treating the customer right with honest reliable service. Now we fix copiers and printers instead of typewriters. Now customers have the option of ordering on-line or coming to the store. Although many things have changed treating the customer right will never go out of style. "We would like to thank all our long time customers."

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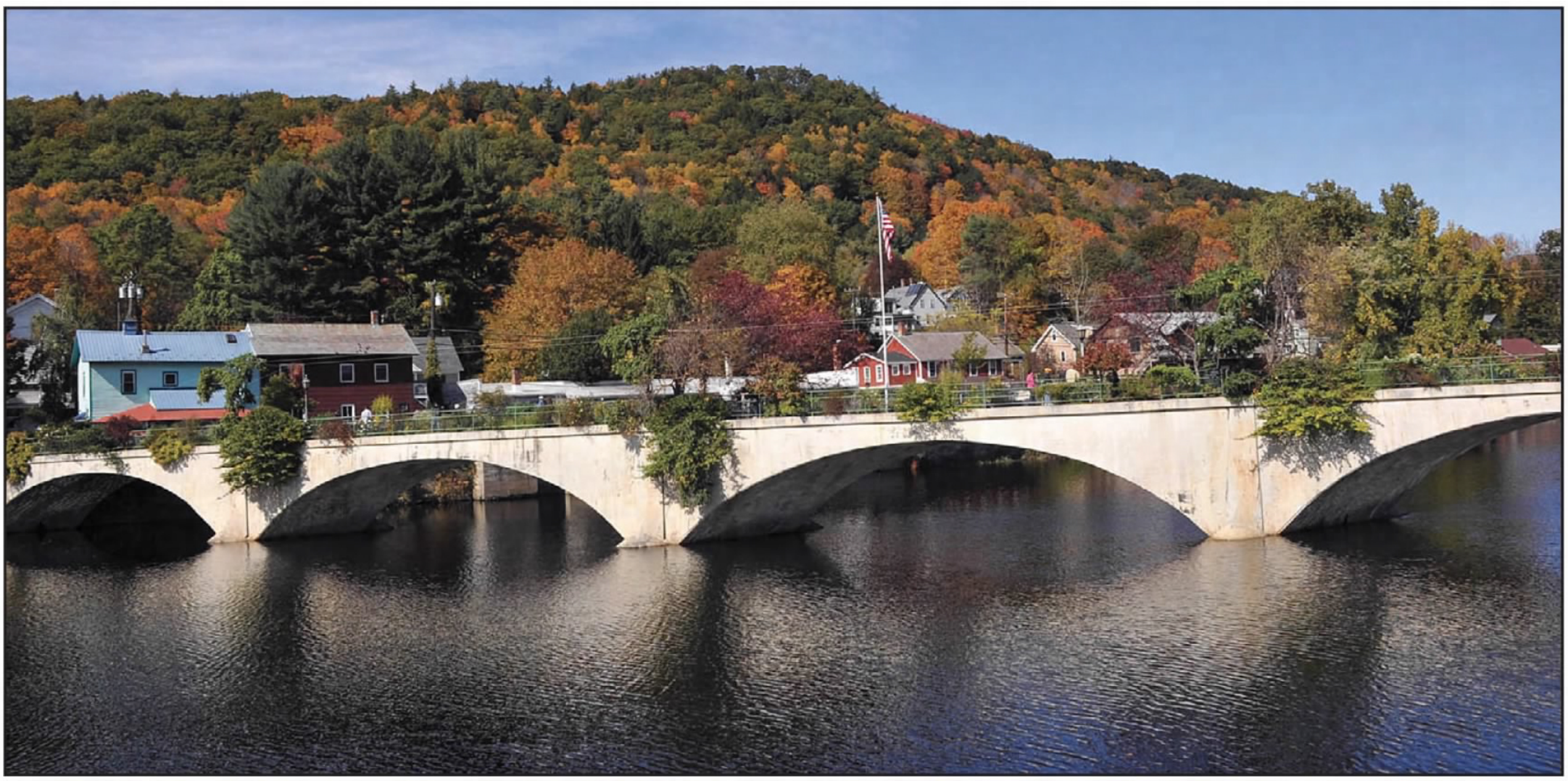

Recorder file photo/Peter Macdonald

Today, the original trolley bridge is preserved as the Bridge of Flowers, attracting visitors from all over the world to Shelburne Falls and Buckland.

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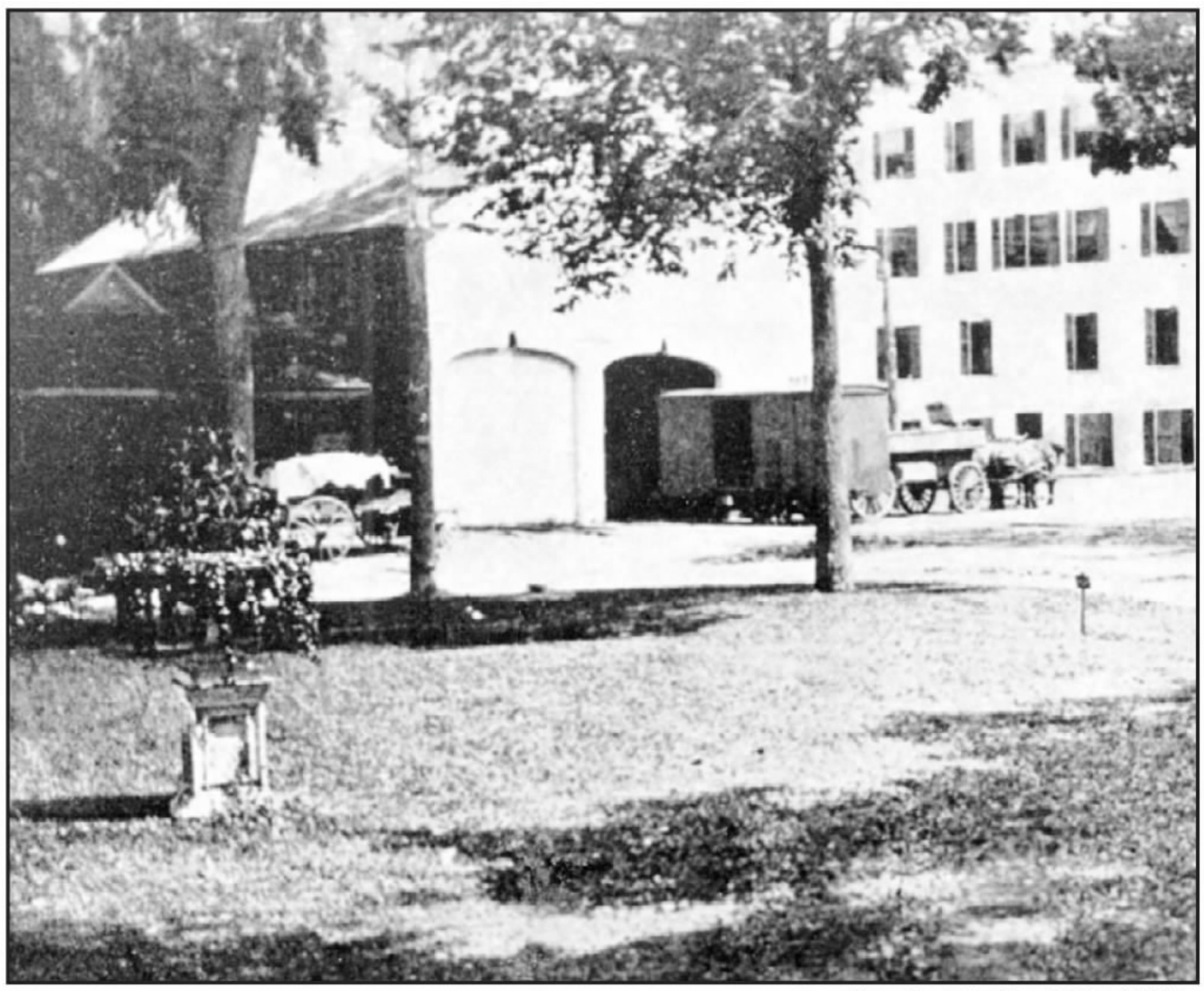

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

The trolley barn in Colrain was located next to the former Colrain Inn.

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Photo from the collection of Peter S. Miller

This rare photo circa 1910 shows the Shelburne Falls trolley bridge, at left, and the iron bridge, at right.

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Continued from Page 10

according to the Transportation Bulletin of The Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway Company, didn't want to create a franchise over their half of the iron bridge.

According to the Transportation Bulletin, "The original intent of the street railway's promoters was to run to the B. & M. station via the iron bridge and transfer all railroad freight to smaller street railway cars, like the Conway Electric Street Railway was doing."

Engineers reportedly stated that the iron bridge was rugged enough to withstand the weight of 20-ton cars.

Once the railway began

Continued on page 15

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

Shelburne Colrain Trolley, before construction of the trolley bridge went in. Taken on the Shelburne Falls side.

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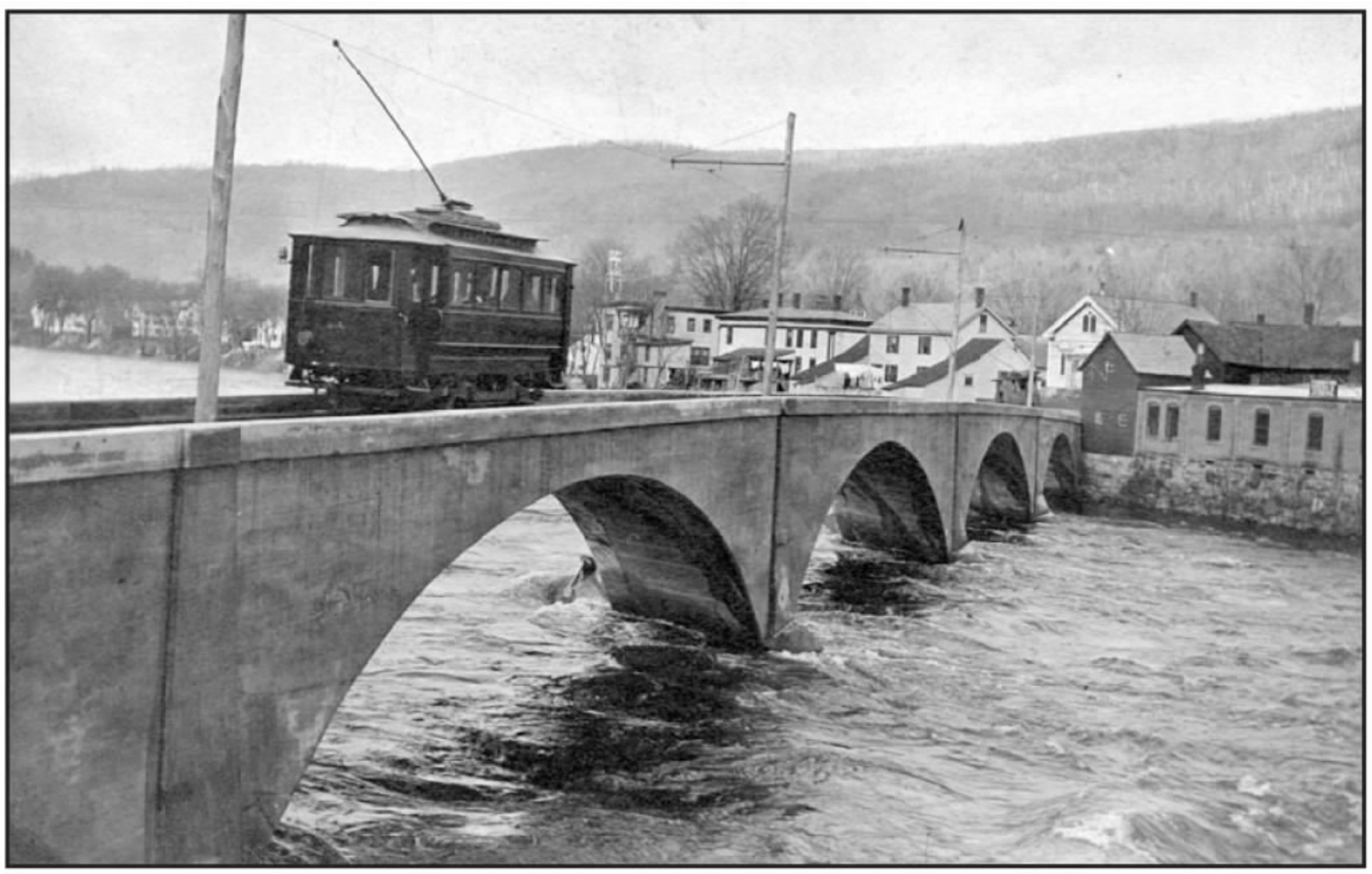

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

This trolley is going from Buckland into Shelburne Falls. Note the connection to the electric line running above the trolley. Circa 1910.

■ Trolley: Initial opposition

From Page 14

operating on the Shelburne side, it wasn't until November 1896, when two efforts were made by management to extend the tracks over the river.

On April 21, 1898, stockholders voted to expand the railway tracks into the town of Buckland to connect with the railroad.

However, the Transportation Bulletin states that local financing eventually fell short. Although the Deerfield Valley Echo reported on June 9, 1898 that more than half of the stock for extending the street railway to the depot had sold, by March 9, 1899, the paper stated that the remaining stock that was on the market had been withdrawn.

Stockholders ended up petitioning the legislature for permission to issue up to $25,000 of preferred stock to build the line to the depot, but the Transportation Bulletin went on to state that "A petition of 12 voters to have the selectmen put the proposition in the warrant for a town meeting was refused by that body at an Oct. 28, 1899 meeting."

Finally on June 22, 1907 the franchise had been granted and "The only condition imposed by the selectmen was that [the] girder rail had to be used on the curve from the bridge toward the B. & M. yards."

Once the water level in the Deerfield River went down enough to begin construction of the bridge's foundation, things were off and rolling.

On Nov. 11, 1908, after completion of the 398-foot-long bridge that included four piers and five arches, the Transportation Bulletin stated that the first power-driven car, a gravel car, crossed the new bridge.

The Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway

The trolley line, which was in operation from 1896 to 1927, served the industrial and agricultural communities along the North River valley between Shelburne Falls and Colrain through the transportation of both passengers and freight.

In a Feb. 22, 1942 article of the Greenfield Recorder-Gazette, the railway company voted to sponsor band concerts in Colrain on Saturday evenings to stimulate interest in the new, eight-mile trolley line. They also conducted Hillside Park in

Continued on Page 16

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The trolley tracks ran through Buckland in the early 20th century. They ran up the middle road up to the railroad station. Today, the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum is hoping to get a grant to study running the tracks back down Depot Street, as seen at left, so visitors could ride the trolley from the village to the trolley museum and back again.

Image courtesy Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum

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Continued from Page 15

Shattuckville as a picnic grounds and baseball field where Shelburne Falls and Colrain residents could go to spend the day.

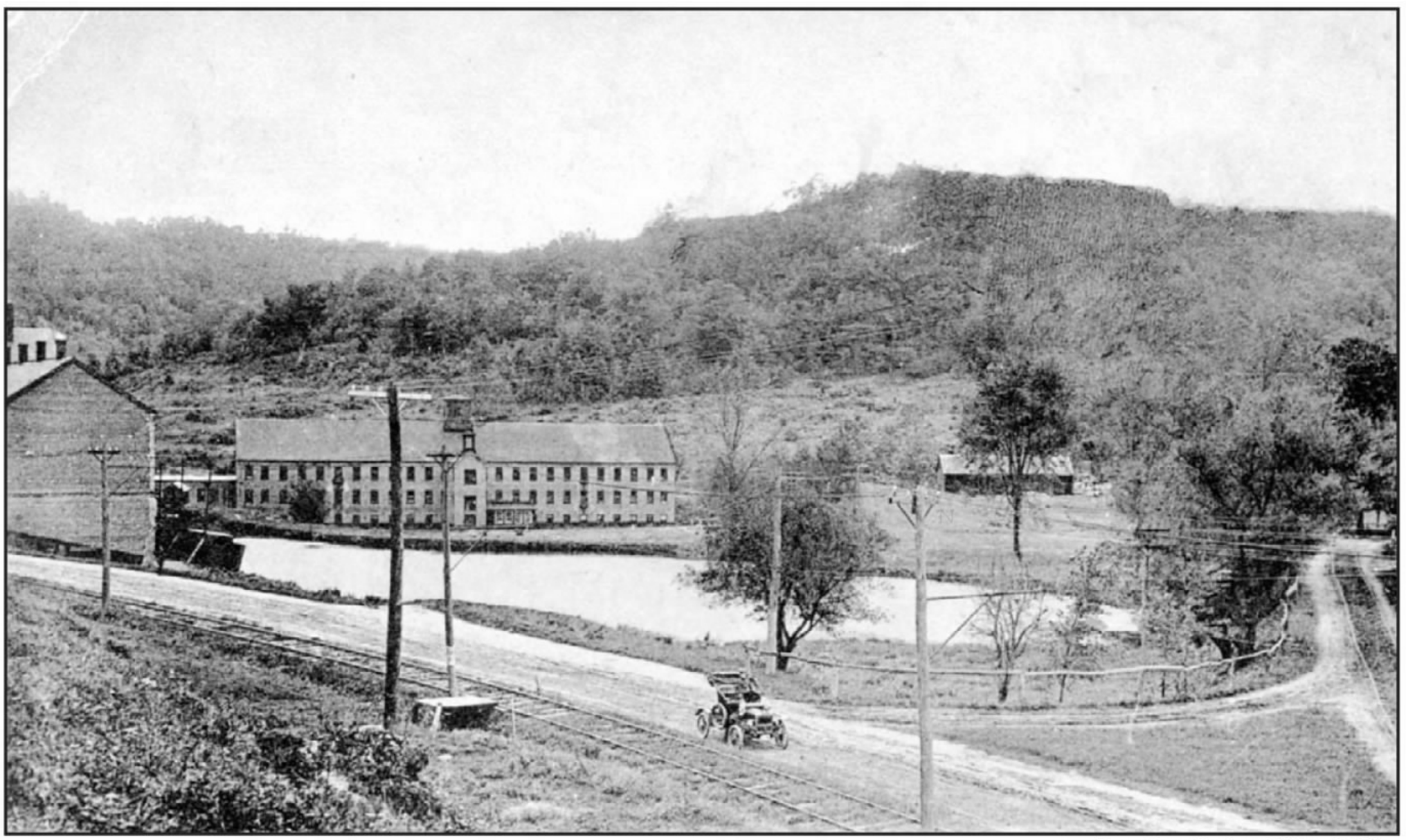
The fare between Shelburne Falls and Colrain was 15 cents; 5 cents to Shattuckville and 10 cents to Griswoldville.

It became a summer pastime for young people to hop onto the slow moving freight cars from the B. & M. Railroad as they crossed the trolley line, taking a 'free' ride to one of the many swimming holes along the Deerfield and North Rivers.

In its 30 years of operation, only one fatality occurred on the trolley line when a man from North Adams was killed in the "dug-way" on upper Main Street during an ice storm.

The Transportation Bulletin states, "A North

Continued on Page 17



From the collection of Peter S. Miller

In the foreground can be seen the trolley tracks to Colrain circa 1905. In the background is a factory.

Continued from Page 16

Adams man was walking on the highway near the point where the 'dugway' of the trolley roadbed and Main Street merged; he slipped on the crusty bank. Sliding down to the tracks just as a car was passing; he was killed under the wheels."

Although accidents involving two trolley cars happened from time to time, none of the cars were ever badly damaged.

One such accident was reported in the Aug. 8, 1917 edition of The Shelburne Falls Messenger:

"A trolley accident occurred near the power-house on the Shelburne Falls & Colrain Street Railway last Thursday

Continued on Page 18

"The Shelburne Falls & Colrain Street Railway Car No. 10 sat outside in Frank Johnson's back yard in East Charlemont from 1928 until 1991, minus its heavy metal parts, which had gone for scrap. Frank, and later his son and daughter-in-law, Marshall and Grace Johnson, used it for a storage shed, a play house for the children, and even tried it one year as a chicken coop. That experiment was short-lived as the birds almost died from the heat and Grace needed to revive some with whiskey. In 1991, Marshall and Grace agreed to donate the car to create the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum. In October 1999, the car moved under its own power for the first time since 1927."

— Alden H. Dreyer

Shelburne Falls & Colrain, Combine No. 10, April 3, 1991. Copyright Alfred Barten 1991.
Courtesy Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum, Inc.

Continued from page 17

morning. The oiling machine had been at work and had oiled not only the road but the car tracks as well. The big car had the right of way and the little car should have gone onto the switch but the brakes failed to hold on account of the oil and the little car slid past and ran into the big car, causing a considerable jar. No damage was done outside of jamming the fenders."

The electrified trolley wire brought out the daredevil in many young boys. Walter Lamorie, who went on to become a motorman later in life, related a telling incident from his school days in the Transportation Bulletin.

"When he was a schoolboy in Colrain, he and some of his classmates had to walk past the grain store siding near Colrain Center every day. Whenever there was a box

Continued on Page 19

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In this Recorder file photo from 2008, Sean Babineau sits on mom Kimberly Babineau with Aunt Tammy Collins next to them during this Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum's annual Mother's Day event on the Buckland side of Shelburne Falls.

Recorder file photo/ Peter MacDonald

Continued from Page 18

car or two on the siding the boys would climb on the steps, play brakeman, and otherwise fool around as boys are wont to do."

"Soon they got more daring and climbed onto the roof of a car. Finally, each boy, one day at a time, had to show his bravery by climbing up and touching the trolley wire. All went without incident until Walter Lamorie's turn. The car he climbed on was a newer, steel-framed box car with metal catwalk."

"When he touched the wire he said he felt he was revolving 'round and 'round the wire like a snake. The shock was not strong enough to burn him or to cause injury, but it injected a healthy respect for [the] trolley wire."

Alden Dreyer, a historian and conductor at the Shelburne Falls Trolley

Continued on Page 20

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Continued from page 19

Museum, said that a trolley car was kept alongside the hotel in what was then known as Colrain City, while the other cars were housed overnight in a freight yard near the Frankton dam, which was located about halfway between the two towns.

"The trolley company had a yard there where they stored all their equipment and they had a dam which used the North River to turn the generators and run the trolley," Dreyer said. "They [also] had a steam plant for when there wasn't enough water in the North River to run the trolley and they had to use coal to burn to make steam to run the generator to run the trolley."

The trolley's demise came about due to the evolution of the automobile as a new form of transportation, coupled with the construction of a

Continued on Page 21

Recorder file photo/Peter MacDonald

In this Recorder file photo from June 2011, Polly Bartlett (in yellow) shows Leyla Bragdon, Jacob Shaw and Barbara Yager from Colrain Center School how to work a hand car during the school's visit to the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum in Buckland as a followup to the school's study of simple tools.

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3204170

Continued from page 20

state highway between Shelburne Falls and Colrain that would ultimately cause the trolley company to need to relocate their railway in several places.

After 30 years of service to two towns, on April 25, 1927, the bondholders foreclosed upon and sold the railway to J.M. Blassberg of Shelburne Falls for junk purposes.

Visit the museum

Although a once vital part of history no longer exists, people can still get a glimpse of the past by visiting the volunteer-run Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum.

Since 1991, the museum has been striving to teach visitors about the old trolley line while continuing to preserve and operate trolley car No. 10 from the Shelburne Falls and

Continued on page 22

file photo

Trolley No. 10 and a caboose at the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum.

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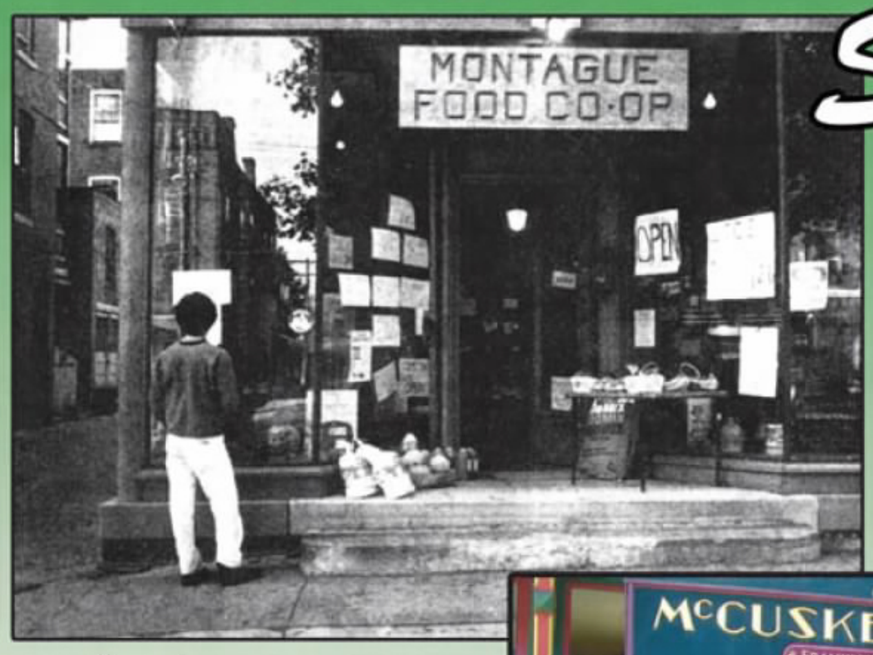

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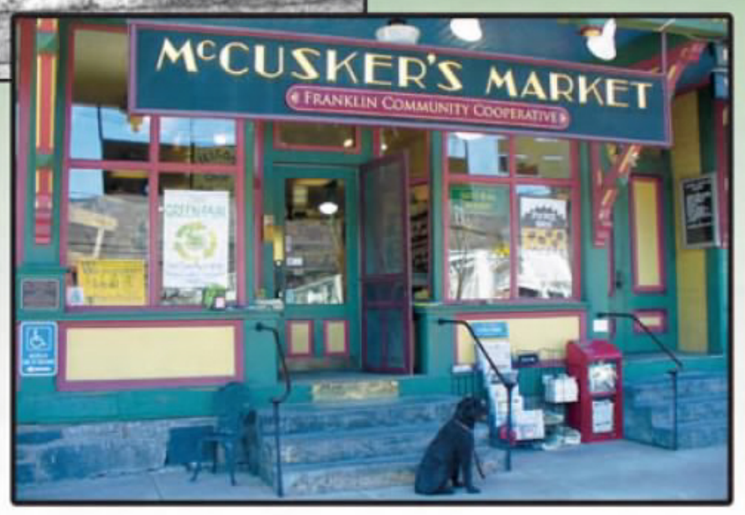

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Continued from page 21

Colrain Street Railway Company.

According to the museum's Web site, "[The] car was built by Wason Manufacturing Co. in Springfield in 1896. It was delivered new to Shelburne Falls and has never left the valley. Saved by a local farmer, it spent 65 years as a chicken coop, tool shed and play house."

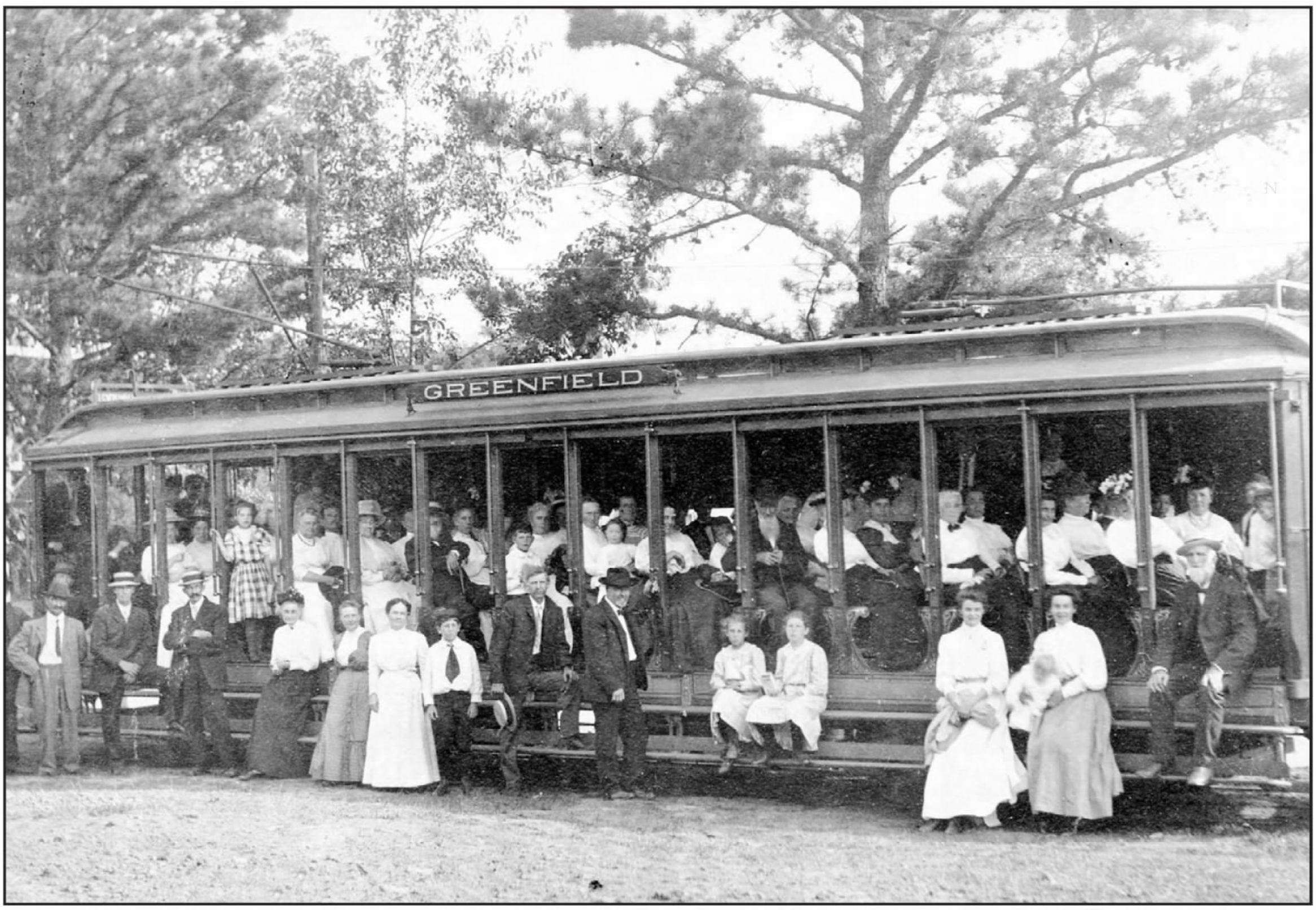
After refurbishing the trolley car, the museum is now offering rides to visitors in the same freight yard that it used to load and unload passengers, apples, mail, milk and other forms of freight over 100 years ago.

The museum is now closed for the season, reopening May 26 for Memorial Day Weekend.

For more information on the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum, visit www.sftm.org.

Above and left: In these Recorder file photos from 2003, Daniel Katzenberg takes the controls of the trolley under the watchful eye of conductor Sam Bartlett as he learns to drive the trolley in Buckland.

Recorder file photos/Peter MacDonald



This Grange group probably hired the trolley car to take them to their annual picnic. Circa 1905.

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

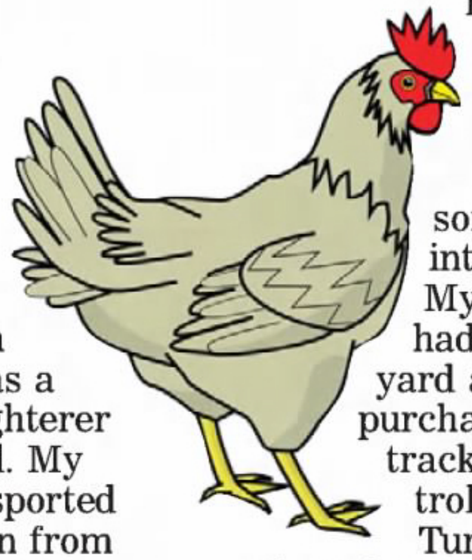
The day the chicken took a ride

By PHYLLIS NAHMAN

My mother, Ethel Rubin, told me this story when I was a kid.

She came to Turners Falls in 1933 to marry my father, Myer Rubin. We're Jewish and there was a Kosher slaughterer in Greenfield. My mother transported a live chicken from Turners Falls to Greenfield on the trolley car to have the butcher slaughter it. She said, of course, nobody wanted to sit next to her and she never did that again.

I talked with my siblings and they remembered the story but nobody remembers the details.



I did learn something interesting: My dad, who had a scrap yard at the time, purchased the tracks from the trolley way in Turners Falls when they were torn up, many years after they stopped being used.

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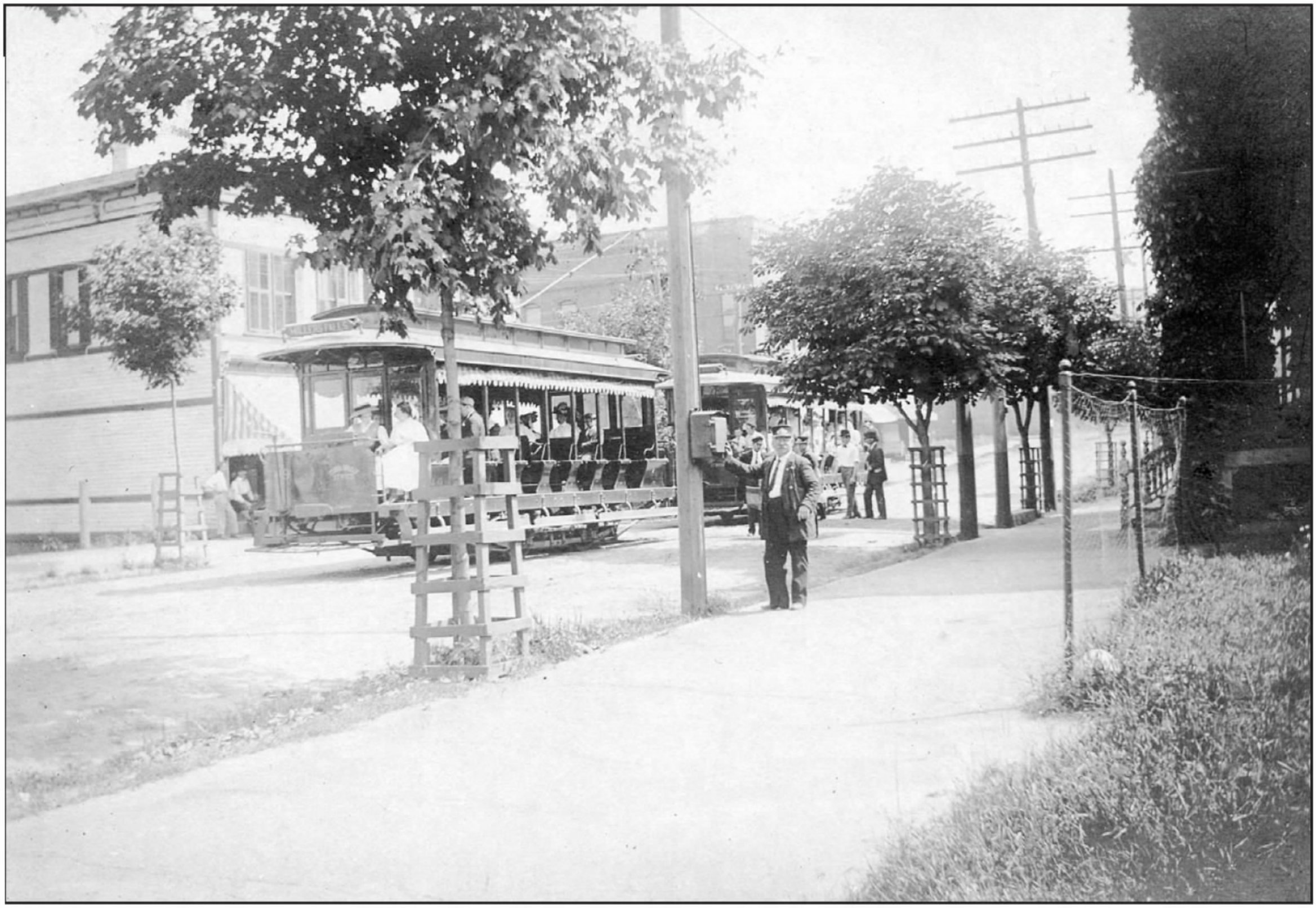

The trolley goes through Millers Falls.

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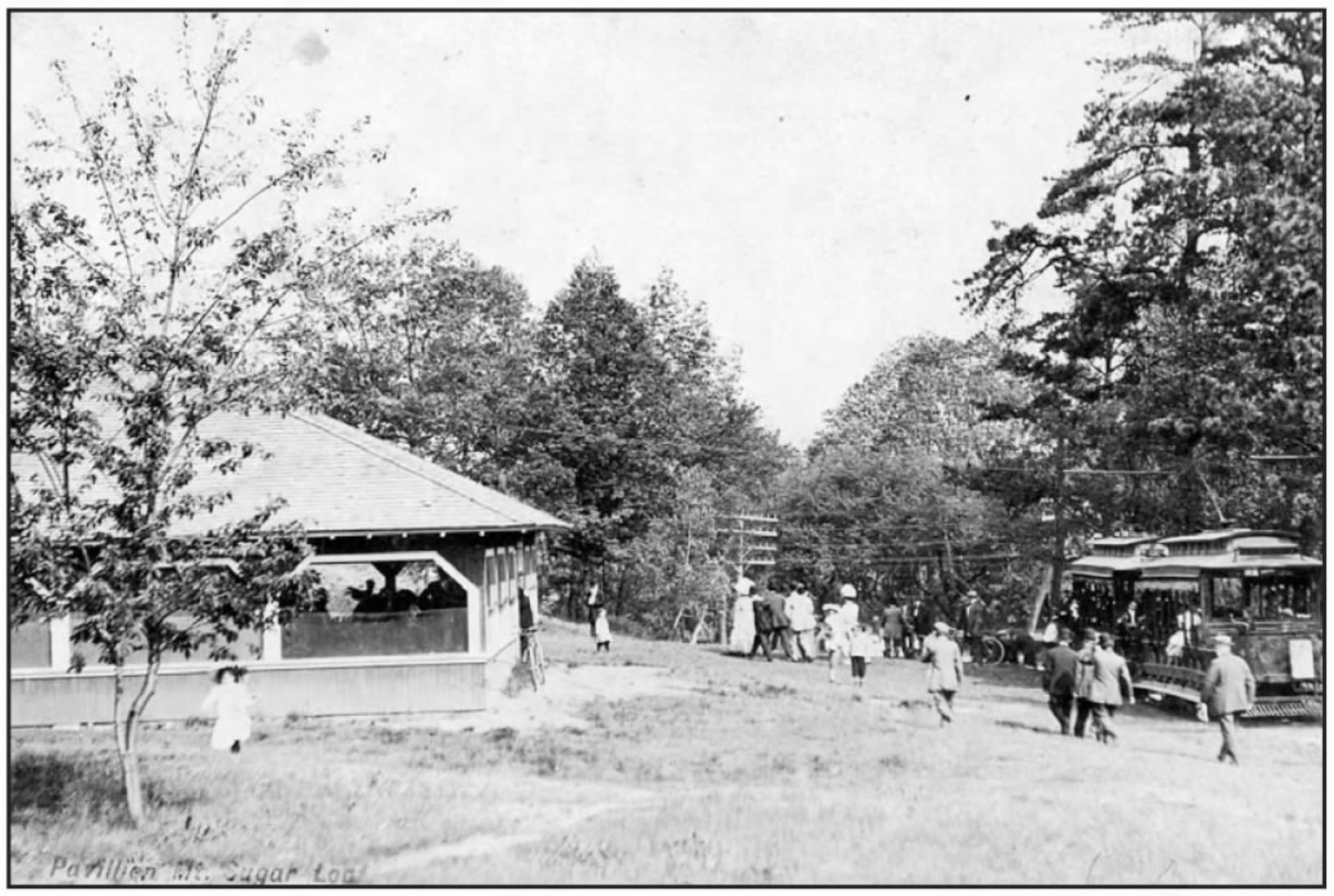
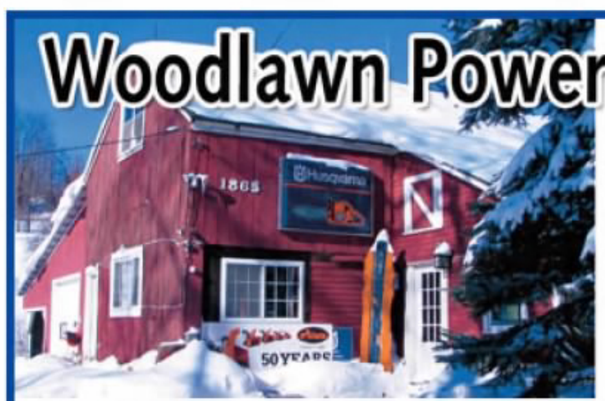


From the collection of Peter S. Miller

The trolley arrives at a dance pavilion right below Sugarloaf Mountain in South Deerfield, a popular trolley destination. Circa 1910.

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

The Knights of Columbus march through downtown Greenfield. You can see the trolley coming up Main Street from the west and also coming up Bank Row. The trolley went around three sides of the common.



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This trolley went to Montague Center circa 1905.

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Trolley's end at Silver Street in Greenfield at the brow of Nashes Mill hill.

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Trolley memories

By IRMARIE JONES

JONES

When I grew up in the 1930s in Mt. Lebanon, a suburb of Pittsburgh, the trolley was part of our lives, since we didn't have a car.

It ran from Castle Shannon, a neighboring town, to the center of our town, where we received a transfer to the trolley that would take us five more miles to the center of Pittsburgh.

And all that cost was a dime, at least for children; 25 cents for my Mom

We'd have to walk a

Continued on Page 28

Left: This trolley bridge over the Connecticut River was built in 1898. It got taken out by the 1936 flood, The covered bridge went first, followed by the trolley bridge and two of the three spans of the New York New Haven and Hartford railroad bridge. Below: Greenfield trolley 106 and two trolleymen.

From the collection of Peter S. Miller

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This is a bus operated by the Connecticut Valley Street Railway Co. It operated at the same time that the trolley was running, circa 1915. Taken near the old trolley barn. This business was the forerunner of the GMTA.

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Continued from Page 26

couple blocks from our house to the first trolley stop. At that place, there was a wooden structure where we could get out of the rain or strong winds.

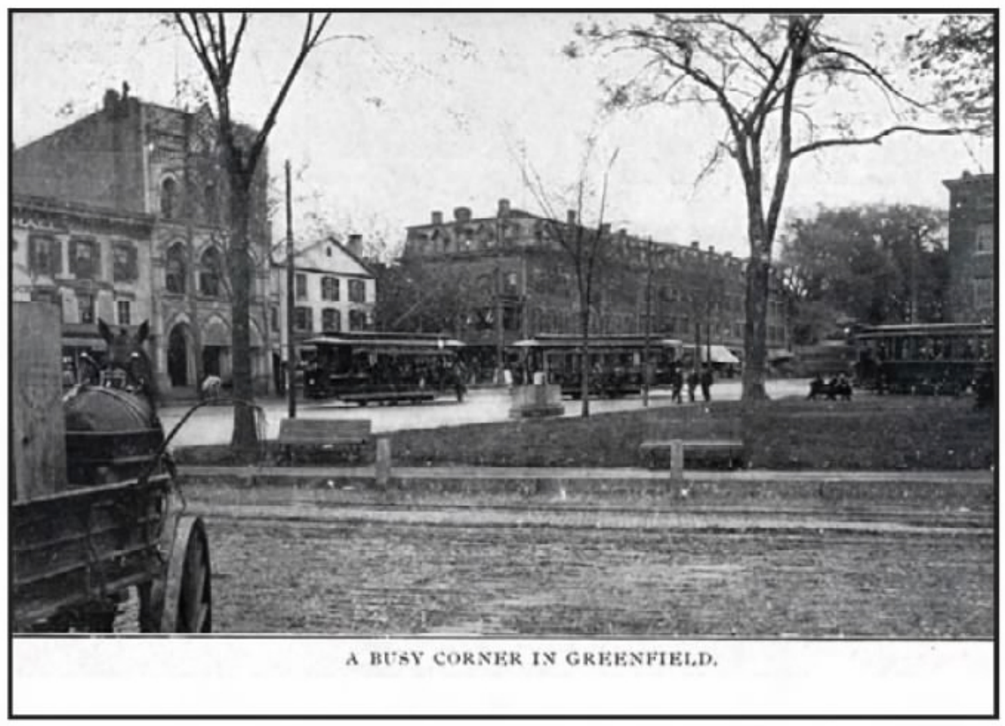
Of course, our family used the trolley to go to the city or even to one of the other little towns along the way. It was always fun and our family knew the conductors.

Once we got to central Pittsburgh and wanted to go to the section where there was a huge park and museums, we could get a paper transfer, still on our original dime. Then, to go home, we'd pay the dime at that park stop and get paper transfers to pick up our trolley and get back to Mt. Lebanon.

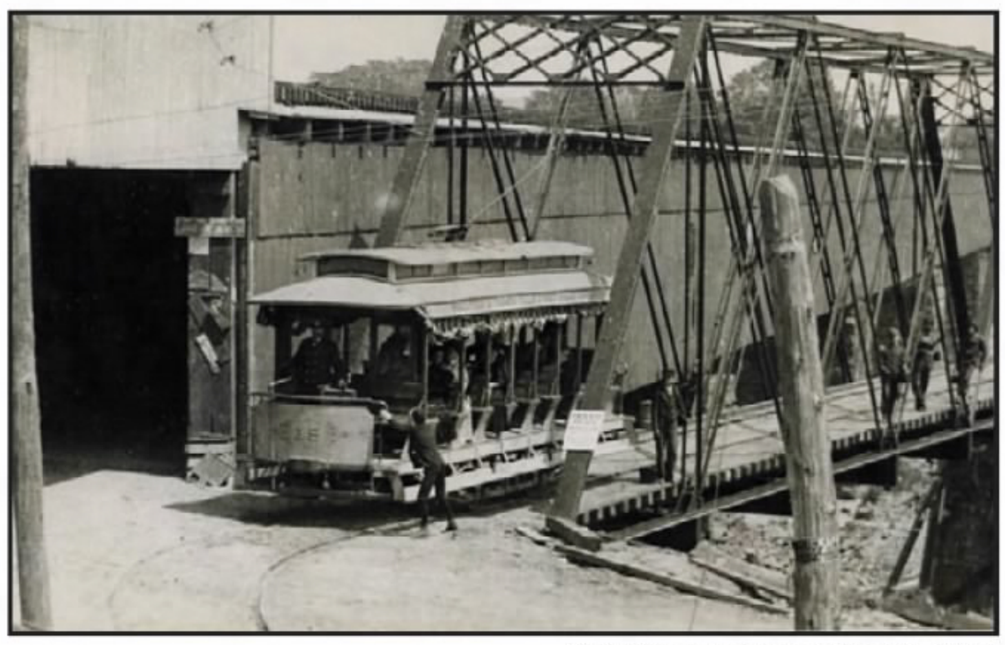
Irmarie Jones has been a member of the newsroom staff since 1969 and a columnist since 1977.

Photos from the collection of Peter S. Miller

Above: This is the original trolley barn of the Greenfield Turners Falls Street Railway Co. in Montague City; the building on the right was the headquarters for the trolley company. Both buildings are still there, just north of the former Farren Memorial Hospital. Below: The caption says, "A busy corner in Greenfield." Image shows the trolleys going up Main Street and around the common, circa 1910. All the buildings depicted, except for the Allen block, are gone. The Mansion House can be seen in the background.



A BUSY CORNER IN GREENFIELD.



From the collection of Peter S. Miller

A trolley enters East Greenfield from Montague City over the East Greenfield trolley bridge. To the left is the old covered bridge entrance. The Boston & Maine Railroad at the time ran over the covered bridge, so that was both a railroad bridge and a pedestrian bridge.

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Photos from the collection of Peter S. Miller

Above: A trolley heading up Federal Street in Greenfield can be seen behind an old gas lantern put there by Henry Welles Clap, who owned the Mansion House at the time. Below: This Greenfield photo was taken during the flood of 1927. The tracks in the foreground go to Cheapside, where they then split and continued on to Northampton and Montague. The golf course is to the left.

To the right are the trolley tracks that went down the Main Street of Old Deerfield. Some of the residents strongly objected to the trolley tracks being built.

Left: Two trolley operators pause for a photo at the end of their run in Montague Center.

Photos from the collection of Peter S. Miller

Top: This trolley car accident happened in South Deerfield circa 1920. Right: The trolley in the distance is crossing the bridge above Stratton's Mill, now the Bookmill, in Montague.
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